

REMARKS

In an Office Action dated January 23, 2007, the Examiner rejected claims 1 and 13, and by implication all of the other claims dependent therefrom, because of insufficient antecedent bases for the limitation in the claim "the members; said message; the identification of the group and the identifications of the members of the group". Applicants are amending claims 1 and 13 to overcome this rejection. Some of the antecedent problems are also being overcome because of amendments responsive to the 35 U.S.C. 102 rejection.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-2, 4-8, 10, 13-14, and 16-18 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,275,575 (Wu). Applicants are clarifying the two independent claims, claims 1 and 13, to highlight the distinction of their invention over the teachings of Wu.

Wu teaches arrangements for establishing a multi-point telephone conference. A coordinator, using software resident on a coordinating server device and menu screens resident on a networked terminal device accessed by the coordinator, provides input to a network. This input includes the identities of the terminals on the conference, attribute data and contact information for non-subscribers to be included in the telephone conference, and descriptive information including an identifier, proposed times, and duration for the proposed telephone conference.

In contrast, as stated in the Summary of the Invention, page 1, Applicants teach and claim:

...an arrangement for connections among all available members of a predefined group in response to the operation of a single soft button for identifying the group. The group can be members of a family, a work group, or a temporary work team.

In accordance with Applicants' invention, a server connected to a telecommunications network has access to or contains a database for identifying the members of each group defined for the network. [Emphasis added]

Thus, it is not necessary in accordance with the teachings of Applicants' invention to input information concerning each of the members of the group each time that a conference is desired because the information about the group has already been stored in a database. Then the operation of a soft button causes the database to be accessed and the

information in the database to be used for setting up the conference connection. As indicated in the Summary of the Invention, this type of facility is particularly desirable for establishing connections among all members of a team such as a temporary work team, a family, or a more permanent work group, i.e., for groups which frequently work together as a group. While this arrangement is implied by claims 1 and 13 as originally presented (since the claims recite that a connection is requested among the members of a group identified in the request and that there is a step or a means for translating between the identification of the group and the identifications of the members of the group), the claims do not specifically recite that the identities of the members of the group are predefined in the database before the system responds to the operation of the indicator.

In terms of the specific passages cited by the Examiner as anticipating claims 1 and 13, Applicants are providing these passages herein for the Examiner's convenience.

In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, a coordinating server device including an interactive voice response unit (IVRU) and a storage means for storing attribute data, contact information and schedule information for a plurality of subscribers is remotely accessed using a networked terminal device (i.e., a personal computer, a cellular phone, a PDA, etc.) by a coordinating subscriber (referred to as the coordinator hereafter) for the purpose of proposing a multi-point telephone conference. The coordinator, with the assistance of software agents resident on the coordinating server device and menu screens resident on the networked terminal device selects subscribers for inclusion in the telephone conference (with or without information modification), inputs attribute data and contact information for non-subscribers to be included in the telephone conference and inputs descriptive information including an identifier, proposed times and duration for the proposed telephone conference. The software agents analyze the conference information, the subscriber and non-subscriber attribute data (which may include information relating to the various terminal devices associated with particular subscribers/non-subscribers) and the available schedule information for the selected participants and generates/forwards appropriately formatted invitations to those invited. Subscriber/non-subscriber responses to the invitations are forwarded to the coordinating server device and the coordinator's terminal device.

In response to the received responses from the subscribers and non-subscribers, the coordinating server device generates and stores a control script for a pre-designated telephone conference server in association with coordinator identification information and the telephone conference identifier. To initiate the telephone conference the coordinator accesses the coordinating server device, selects the identifier for the previously stored telephone conference and inputs a pre-designated key sequence (e.g., depresses a softkey labeled conference, enters a PIN, etc.). Additionally, the coordinator may input scheduling information for

the multi-point telephone conference which would enable the telephone conference server to automatically initiate contact with the selected participants at a pre-determined time. [6,275,575, col. 2, line 55 - col. 3, line 26]

Upon commencement of the telephone conference telephone conference server 106 can be instructed to automatically contact those participants who responded positively to the conference invitation or can coordinate the meeting as the participants join the multi-point telephone congress in progress. [6,275,575, col. 5, line 66 - col. 6, line 4]

c) the coordinator is able to initiate communication to the particular terminal device or devices (either directly or through an intermediate server device) which are accessible to the selected participants at the time of invitation delivery, and [6,275,575, col. 6, lines 31-35]

Graphical user interface screen 400 facilitates coordinator input of conference information (i.e., conference title, conference scheduling information, participant identifiers and participant contact information). The coordinator, inputting the conference information for a given telephone conference, has the option of supplying one or more default contact identifiers to be used in the invitation and/or conference initialization process or of having the coordinating server device software agents (coordinating server device 102 of FIG. 1) retrieve participant contact information based on the participant identifiers provided using the <SMART LOOK> option shown in section 412. If the <SMART LOOK> option is selected then the coordinating server device software agents will retrieve contact information from the selected participant's designated storage areas (i.e. the participant's daily schedule). [6,275,575, col. 8, lines 38-53]

Applicants respectfully assert that none of these passages teach the establishment of a group connection for a predefined group as recited in Applicants' Summary of the Invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1 and 13 are not anticipated by Wu and should be held allowable. The rest of the claims are dependent from one of these two independent claims and should therefore also be held allowable.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider the grounds for the rejection of claims 1-20 as amended, allow the application including claims 1-20 as amended, and pass the application to issue.

If the Examiner feels that a voice or fax contact would help to advance the prosecution of this application, he is invited to contact Applicants' attorney at telephone number 630 469-3575.

Respectfully submitted

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Date: April 8, 2007